

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A mold for manufacturing pellets of hot-melt ink which consists essentially of first and second dies which are essentially cup-shaped and have a wall thickness of smaller than 2.0 mm, said first and second dies defining a mold cavity, said dies being separable from one another, at least one of said dies having a wall thickness which is smaller than one-half the average diameter of the mold cavity, the upper one of said first and second dies containing a single runner hole disposed substantially in the center of said upper die and having a size sufficient for the introduction of ink for the manufacture of said pellets into the mold cavity.

2. (Previously Presented) The mold according to claim 1, wherein said dies are essentially cup-shaped and have a wall thickness smaller than 2.0 mm.

3. (Original) The mold according to claim 1, wherein the dies are made of a metal or a metal alloy.

4. (Currently Amended) The mold of claim 3, wherein the dies are made of ~~aluminium~~ aluminum or stainless steel.

5. (Previously Presented) The mold of claim 3, wherein a heating system is operatively associated with at least one of said dies.

6. (Original) The mold of claim 3, wherein the heating means includes means for blowing hot air against the outer surfaces of the dies.

7. (Currently Amended) The mold of claim 3, wherein said runner ~~holes are provided in the dies~~ is adapted for introducing blown air into the mold cavity.

8. (Previously Presented) The mold of claim 5 wherein the heating means is a heating block containing a plurality of first and/or second dies of recesses for accommodating a plurality of molds.

9. (Previously Presented) The mold of claim 11, wherein the recesses have a flat surface which defines a large contact area to accommodate corresponding flanges on the dies.

10. (Previously Presented) The mold of claim 1, wherein the first and second dies define a substantially spherical mold cavity.

11. (Previously Presented) A mold for manufacturing pellets of hot-melt ink which comprises first and second dies defining a mold cavity, said dies being separable from one another, at least one of said dies having a wall thickness which is smaller than one-half the average diameter of the mold cavity, the upper one of said first and second dies containing a runner hole of a size sufficient for the introduction of ink for the manufacture of said pellets into the mold cavity;

and a heating system is operatively associated with at least one of said dies, said heating system being a heating block containing a plurality of first and/or second dies of recesses for accommodating a plurality of molds.

12. (Previously Presented) The mold of claim 1 wherein the mold cavity is completely sealed except for said runner hole.

13. (New) A mold for manufacturing pellets of hot-melt ink which consists essentially of first and second dies made of a metal or a metal alloy and defining a mold cavity said dies being separable from one another, at least one of said dies having a wall thickness which is smaller than one-half the average diameter of the mold cavity, the upper one of said first and second dies containing a single runner hole disposed substantially in the center of said upper die and having a size sufficient for the introduction of ink for the manufacture of said pellets into the mold cavity, and a heating system operatively associated with at least one of said dies.

14. (New) The mold according to claim 13, wherein said dies are essentially cup-shaped and have a wall thickness smaller than 2.0 mm.

15. (New) The mold according to claim 13, wherein the dies are made of a metal or a metal alloy.

16. (New) The mold of claim 13, wherein the heating means includes means for blowing hot air against the outer surfaces of the dies.

17. (New) The mold of claim 13, wherein said runner is adapted for introducing blown air into the mold cavity.

18. (New) The mold of claim 13 wherein the heating means is a heating block containing a plurality of first and/or second dies of recesses for accommodating a plurality of molds.

19. (New) The mold of claim 8, wherein the recesses have a flat surface which defines a large contact area to accommodate corresponding flanges on the dies.

20. (New) The mold of claim 13 wherein the mold cavity is completely sealed except for said runner hole.